Service Analysis
Social Media Threat Detection

Katy Independent
School District

March 2018

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social Sentinel is an alerting service that scans over 1 billion public posts each day from 12 social media sources including Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and others. The service identifies possible threats using a library of over 450,000 behavioral threat indicators and matches those threats to a specific geographic region through geo-location and keyword association. When a possible active shooter or self-harm post is identified, an alert is sent to pre-defined users in the District via text and email. In addition, a daily report is emailed with all identified threats to a pre-defined set of users in the District.

2. CONSIDERATIONS

- Social Sentinel only scans publicly available posts from social media companies, no private information is accessed through the service
- No Katy ISD data (student, staff, etc.) is shared with Social Sentinel
- Social Sentinel scans for posts directly related to a harmful threat, self-harm or narcotics.
- Social Sentinel is a security measure – it is important to decide how private or public its use should be made
- Social Sentinel requires a set of Katy ISD staff receive notifications. The team designated to receive, research and respond to relevant posts needs to be identified.
- A practical plan for response to credible posts should be in place prior to implementation of the system.
- Social Sentinel requires ongoing configuration to identify and filter viable posts for each specific school district. Based on Social Sentinel, once the system is configured for Katy ISD, the District should receive 5 to 10 alerts on average per day. Certain circumstances, like a school shooting in another part of the country, will cause a spike in alerts based on the fact that words like gun, shoot or kill appear in a larger percentage of non-threatening posts.
- Other companies (listed below) were researched and consulted during the review of Social Sentinel. The findings are that Social Sentinel is the most relevant, K-12 directed social media threat detection service available and is already in use or being implemented around the country and in several Texas school districts.
  - o Digital Stakeout
  - o GeoListening
  - o SnapTrends (researched; although no longer providing this service)
  - o GeoFeedia (researched; although no longer providing this service)
  - o Media Sonar (Twitter revoked access because of surveillance policy)

3. ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Implementing Social Sentinel should require no additional staffing. Added responsibility will be necessary for the notification and response team. Technology will aid in set-up and ongoing configuration of the system.